

000 the weapons of the dialectician and those of his adversary. A match between the two is like a duel between a foot soldier and a tank. Not that every dialectician is so very intelligent or so very well educated, but all his statements are enriched by the cumulated thought of the masters and their commentators. If every sentence he speaks is compact and effective, that is not due to his own merits, but to those of the classics he has studied. His listeners are defenseless. They could, it is true, resort to arguments derived from their observations of life, but such arguments are just as badly countenanced as any questioning of fundamental methodology. The dialectician rubs up against his public at innumerable meetings of professional organizations and youth groups in clubs, factories, office buildings, and village huts throughout the entire converted area of Europe. And there is no doubt that he emerges the victor in these encounters.

156 It is no wonder that a writer or painter doubts the wisdom of resistance. If he were sure that art opposed to the official line could have a lasting value, he probably would not hesitate. He would earn his living through some more menial job within his profession, write or paint in his spare time, and never worry about publishing or exhibiting his work. He believes, however, that in most cases such work would be artistically poor, and he is not far wrong. As we have already said, the objective conditions he once knew have disappeared. The objective conditions necessary to the realization of a work of art are, as we know, a highly complex phenomenon, involving one's public, the possibility of contact with it, the general atmosphere, and above all freedom from involuntary subjective control. "I can't write as I would like to," a young Polish poet admitted to me. "My own stream of thought has so many tributaries, that I barely succeed in damming

The Pill of Murti-Bing

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off one, when a second, third, or fourth overflows. I get halfway through a phrase, and already I submit it to Marxist criticism. I imagine what X or Y will say about it, and I change the ending." ¹⁵⁶₆₂₆ ●

Paradoxical as it may seem, it is this subjective impotence that convinces the intellectual that the one Method is right. Everything proves it is right. Dialectics: I predict the house will burn; then I pour gasoline over the stove. The house burns; my prediction is fulfilled. Dialectics: I predict that a work of art incompatible with socialist realism will be worthless. Then I place the artist in conditions in which such a work *is* worthless. My prediction is fulfilled.

Let us take poetry as an example. Obviously, there is poetry of political significance. Lyric poetry is permitted to exist on certain conditions. It must be: 1) serene; 2) free of any elements of thought that might trespass against the universally accepted principles (in practice, this comes down to descriptions of nature and of one's feelings for friends and family); 3) understandable. Since a poet who is not allowed to *think* in his verse automatically tends to perfect his form, he is accused of formalism.

It is not only the literature and painting of the people's democracies that prove to the intellectual that *things cannot be different*. He is strengthened in this belief by the news that seeps through from the West. The Western world is the world of Witkiewicz's novel. The number of its aesthetic and philosophical aberrations is myriad. Disciples imitate disciples; the past imitates the past. This world lives as if there had never been a Second World War. Intellectual clans in Eastern Europe know this life, but know it as a stage of the past that isn't worth looking back on. Even if the new problems are so oppressive that they can break a great many people, at least they are con-

000 try living on remembered glories, be imitated in Prague or Warsaw? Why should English plays, written for a completely different public, be played in these Eastern capitals? One must break that habit of imitation which was inevitable as long as French, English, or Belgian capital, investing in the mines, railroads, and factories of the "Eastern Marches," pushed its books, films, and styles upon them. Just as nationalized industry now stands on its own feet, so Eastern European cultures must learn to stand by their own strength.

● 626 Unhappily, in freeing themselves from the spell of the West, the literature, science, and art of these Marches became totally dependent on the new metropolis. Once imitation was spontaneous and voluntary, but now it is obligatory. Any attempt to find one's own way is denounced as Titoism. Any attempt to reach into one's own national past is possible only to the extent that that past parallels the development of the Russian nation. One may turn to folklore, obviously, and to the realistic plays of the nineteenth century. But, for example, Poland has a tradition of romantic drama which does not lend itself to realistic representation. It also possesses a tradition of stage production which is known as "monumental theater." To continue such traditions would smack of dangerous heresy. The fight against "cosmopolitanism" is in reality nothing more than the act of emptying a retort and refilling it with a different fluid. In the past, a particular substance was created in this retort through the interaction of native and imported elements. Today the imported element appears in much purer form, for a sufficient number of laboratory workers are eager to maintain the necessary respect for the formula.

186 In the last century, the "decadent West" was condemned by patriotic Russian historians because it was liberal, and
 3 [The "Eastern Marches" - Analyst]

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ever, to proceed somewhat in the manner of a naturalist determining major groups and families.

National Ketman is broadly diffused throughout the masses, and even the upper brackets of the Party in the various dependent states are not free of it. Because Tito, like Sadra, announced his heresy to all the world, millions of human beings in the people's democracies must employ exceedingly ingenious means of masking themselves. Instructive displays of condemnation of those who wished to follow the national road to socialism in individual Eastern capitals taught the public what kind of phrases and reflexes can expose one to reproach for harboring this fatal tendency. The surest safeguard is to manifest loudly one's awe at Russia's achievements in every field of endeavor, to carry Russian books under one's arm, to hum Russian songs, to applaud Russian actors and musicians enthusiastically, etc. A writer who has not consecrated a single work to outstanding Russian figures or to Russian life, but has confined himself to national themes, cannot consider himself entirely safe. The chief characteristic of the people who practice this Ketman is an unbounded contempt for Russia as a barbaric country. Among the workers and peasants it is most often purely emotional, and based on observation of either the soldiers of the liberating army, or (since during the war a great many were in areas directly administered by the Russians) of Russians in their daily life.

Because until now the living standard of the masses in Russia was so much lower than that of the so-called people's democracies, national Ketman finds abundant nourishment. It cannot be defined simply as nationalism. For many centuries hatred existed between the Central European Slavs and the Germans, still it was colored

1 [For a definition of "Ketman", see cat. 116; pp. 57-60. Analyst.]

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● 626 among the Slavs by a respect for Germany's material achievements. On the other hand, perceiving by comparison the greater refinement of his own customs, his greater organizational ability (be it only in respect to transportation or the handling of machinery), the Central European would express his attitude toward Russia, if he could, by a disdainful shrug of his shoulders—which, however, doesn't prevent him from shuddering in fear before the countless hordes pouring out of the Euro-Asian continent.

But this Ketman is not exclusively emotional in its appeal. Amid the young intelligentsia of working-class origin the overwhelming opinion can be summed up shortly as "Socialism—yes, Russia—no"; and this is where the subtleties of doctrinal differences arise. The countries of Europe, this line of reasoning begins, are infinitely more prepared to realize socialism than Russia. Their population is more intelligent; most of their land is under cultivation; their systems of communication and their industry are more highly developed. Measures based on absolute cruelty are unnecessary and even pointless since there exists a greater degree of social discipline. Nevertheless, "the national road to socialism" has been condemned and many efforts made to prove that whoever is opposed to total adaptation to Russian models and to surrendering to Russian dictatorship is a traitor who must share the fate of Tito—that is, must come out against the Center,² and thus weaken its war potential without which there can be no revolution on a world scale. To pronounce oneself against this thesis would be to deny the New Faith and to introduce in its place a different faith, for example one directly linked to Marx and Engels. Many do so. Others, seeing in the alliance between Tito and the West an example of historical fatality, and rejecting the idea that this fatality

2 [ie Moscow -- 1949-57]

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may be due simply to the Center's policy toward dependent nations, shut themselves up in a Ketman which does not hamper the Center in its external acts. A true Moslem, even though he be deeply attached to his Ketman, never seeks to injure Islam in those areas where it is fighting for its life against unbelievers. Such Ketman expresses itself only in practical moves which do no harm in the world struggle, but which on the other hand safeguard national interests whenever possible. 186 626 •

The Ketman of Revolutionary Purity is a rare variety, more common in the large cities of Russia than in the people's democracies. It is based on a belief in the "sacred fire of the revolutionary epoch of Lenin" which burns in such a poet as Mayakovski. Mayakovski's suicide in 1930 marked the end of an era distinguished by the flowering of literature, the theater, and music. The "sacred fire" was dampened, collectivization was introduced mercilessly, millions of Soviet citizens perished in slave labor camps, a ruthless policy toward non-Russian nations was established. Literature became flat and colorless under the influence of imposed theories; Russian painting was destroyed; Russian theater, then the foremost in the world, was deprived of freedom to experiment; science was subjected to directives from Party chiefs. A man who reasons thus hates Him with all his heart, holding Him responsible for the terrible lot of the Russian people and for the hatred they inspire in other nations.

Still, he is not altogether sure whether He is necessary or not. Perhaps in extraordinary periods such as the present the appearance of a tyrant must be considered desirable. Mass purges in which so many good communists died, the lowering of the living standard of the citizens, the reduction of artists and scholars to the status of yes-men, the extermination of entire national groups—what

186 other man would dare undertake such measures? After
 ● 626 all, Russia stood firm against Hitler; the Revolution
 weathered the attack of enemy armies. In this perspective,
 His acts seem effective and even justified, perhaps, by an
 exceptional historical situation. If He had not instituted
 an exceptional terror in the year 1937, wouldn't there have
 been more people willing to help Hitler than there actu-
 ally were? For example, doesn't the present-day line in
 scholarship and art, no matter how at odds it may be at
 times with common sense, effectually raise Russian morale
 in the face of the war that threatens? He is an infamous
 blot on the bright New Faith, but a blemish we must
 tolerate for the moment. And indeed we must even
 support Him. The "sacred fire" has not gone out. When
 victory is achieved, it will burst forth again with its old
 strength, the bonds He imposed will fall away, and rela-
 tions between nations will operate on new and better
 principles. This variety of Ketman was widespread if not
 universal in Russia during the Second World War, and its
 present form is a rebirth of an already once-deceived hope.

626 *Aesthetic Ketman*² is born of the disparity between man's
 517 longings and the sense-satisfactions the New Faith offers.

A man of taste cannot approve the results of official pres-
 sure in the realm of culture no matter how much he ap-
 plauds the latest verses, how many flattering reviews he
 writes of current art expositions, nor how studiously he
 pretends that the gloomy new buildings coincide with his
 personal preferences in architecture. He changes com-
 pletely within the four walls of his home. There one finds
 (if he is a well-situated intellectual) reproductions of
 works of art officially condemned as bourgeois, records
 of modern music, and a rich collection of ancient authors
 in various languages. This luxury of splendid isolation is
 pardoned him so long as his creative work is effective prop-
 2 [For a definition of "ketman," see cat. 116, pp. 57-60 -- Analyst]

Ketman

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aganda. To protect his position and his apartment (which he has by the grace of the State), the intellectual is prepared to make any sacrifice or compromise; for the value of privacy in a society that affords little if any isolation is greater than the saying "my home is my castle" can lead one to surmise. Two-way television screens installed in private homes to observe the behavior of citizens in seclusion belong as yet to the future. Hence, by listening to foreign radio stations and reading good books, he profits from a moment of relaxation; that is, of course, if he is alone, for as soon as guests arrive the play begins anew. 626 • 577

Never has there been a close study of how necessary to a man are the experiences which we clumsily call aesthetic. Such experiences are associated with works of art for only an insignificant number of individuals. The majority find pleasure of an aesthetic nature in the mere fact of their existence within the stream of life. In the cities, the eye meets colorful store displays, the diversity of human types. Looking at passers-by, one can guess from their faces the story of their lives. This movement of the imagination when a man is walking through a crowd has an erotic tinge; his emotions are very close to physiological sensations. He rejoices in dresses, in the flash of lights; while, for instance, Parisian markets with their heaps of vegetables and flowers, fish of every shape and hue, fruits, sides of meat dripping with every shade of red offer delights, he need not go seeking them in Dutch or Impressionist painting. He hears snatches of arias, the throbbing of motors mixed with the warble of birds, called greetings, laughter. His nose is assailed by changing odors: coffee, gasoline, oranges, ozone, roasting nuts, perfumes.

Those who have sung of the large cities have consecrated many pages to the description of this joyous immersion in the reservoir of universal life. The swimmer who trusts

- 626 himself to the wave, and senses the immensity of the element that surrounds him. 577 lives through a like emotion. I am thinking of such great singers of the city as Balzac, Baudelaire, and Whitman. It would seem that the exciting and invigorating power of this participation in mass life springs from the feeling of *potentiality*, of constant unexpectedness, of a mystery one ever pursues.

Even the life of the peasants, though it be dulled by brutalizing hand labor, allows for aesthetic expression in the rhythm of custom, the rites of the church, holy pictures, country fairs, native costumes, paper flower decorations, folk sculptures, music, and dances.

In the countries of the New Faith the cities lose their former aspect. The liquidation of small private enterprises gives the streets a stiff and institutional look. The chronic lack of consumer goods renders the crowds uniformly gray and uniformly indigent. When consumer products do appear, they are of a single second-rate quality. Fear paralyzes individuality and makes people adjust themselves as much as possible to the average type in their gestures, clothing, and facial expressions. Cities become filled with the racial type well-regarded by the rulers: short, square men and women, with short legs and wide hips. This is the proletarian type, cultivated to an extreme, thanks to binding aesthetic standards. (We know that these same **dummy women** and stocky men could change completely under the influence of films, painting, and fashion, for America has proved that mass communication is at least as important as diet in determining physical appearance.) Streets, factories, and meeting places sport the inevitable red flags and painted slogans. The new buildings are monumental and oppressive, lightness and charm in architecture being condemned as formalistic. The number of aesthetic experiences accessible to a city-dweller in the

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countries of the New Faith is uncommonly limited. The only place of magic is the theater, for the spell of the theater exists even though confined by the commands of socialist realism which define both the contents of a play and stage décor. The tremendous popular success of authors like Shakespeare is due to the fact that their fantasy triumphs even within the bounds of naturalistic stage setting. The hunger for *strangeness* that is so great inside the Imperium should give the rulers pause; yet in all probability it does not, for they consider such longings derelicts from the past.

In the villages, where the entire former pattern of custom is to be abolished through the transformation of peasants into agricultural workers, there still remain survivals of the individual peasant cultures which slowly stratified over the centuries. Still, let us speak frankly, the main supports of this culture were usually the wealthier peasants. The battle against them, and their subsequent need to hide, must lead to the atrophy of peasant dress, decoration of huts, cultivation of private gardens, etc. There is a definite contradiction between the official protection of folklore (as a harmless form of national culture designed to satisfy patriotic tendencies) and the necessities of the new economic structure.

In these conditions aesthetic Ketman has every possibility of spreading. It is expressed not only in that unconscious longing for strangeness which is channeled toward controlled amusements like theater, film, and folk festivals, but also into various forms of escapism. Writers burrow into ancient texts, comment upon and re-edit ancient authors. They write children's books so that their fancy may have slightly freer play. Many choose university careers because research into literary history offers a safe pretext for plunging into the past and for converse

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- 626 with works of great aesthetic value. The number of trans-
517 lators of former prose and poetry multiplies. Painters seek
an outlet for their interests in illustrations for children's
books, where the choice of gaudy colors can be justified
by an appeal to the "naïve" imagination of children. Stage
managers, doing their duty by presenting bad contem-
porary works, endeavor to introduce into their repertoires
the plays of Lope de Vega or Shakespeare—that is, those
of their plays which are approved by the Center. 4

Some representatives of the plastic arts are so daring that they reveal their Ketman to no small degree by proclaiming the need of an aesthetic of everyday life, and by establishing special institutes to design fabrics, furniture, glass, and ceramics for industry. There is money for such enterprises, and they find support among the most intelligent dialecticians of the upper circles of the Party. Such efforts deserve respect when one considers that before the Second World War Poland and Czechoslovakia were, aside from Sweden and Finland, the leading countries in interior decoration. Nevertheless, there is no reason why that which passes as formalism in painting and architecture should be tolerated for any length of time in the applied arts.

The rationalization of aesthetic Ketman is obvious: since everything is planned in a socialist economy, why not proceed to a planned satisfaction of the aesthetic needs of human beings? Here, however, we trespass upon the treacherous territory of the demon, Psychology. To admit that a man's eye has need of exultant colors, harmonious forms, or light sunny architecture is to affirm that the taste of the Center is bad. However, even there one can see some progress. They are already erecting skyscrapers patterned after the buildings raised in Chicago about the year 1900. It is possible that in the year 2000 they will officially introduce art forms that today are considered

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modern in the West. But how can one still the thought ⁶²⁶ that aesthetic experiences arise out of something organic, ⁵¹⁷ and that the union of color and harmony with fear is as difficult to imagine as brilliant plumage on birds living in the northern tundras?

Professional Ketman is reasoned thus: since I find my ⁶²⁶ self in circumstances over which I have no control, and ¹⁵⁵ since I have but one life and that is fleeting, I should strive to do my best. I am like a crustacean attached to a crag on the bottom of the sea. Over me storms rage and huge ships sail; but my entire effort is concentrated upon clinging to the rock, for otherwise I will be carried off by the waters and perish, leaving no trace behind. If I am a scientist I attend congresses at which I deliver reports strictly adhering to the Party line. But in the laboratory I pursue my research according to scientific methods, and in that alone lies the aim of life. If my work is successful, it matters little how it will be presented and toward whose glory. Discoveries made in the name of a disinterested search for truth are lasting, whereas the shrieks of politicians pass. I must do all they demand, they may use my name as they wish, as long as I have access to a laboratory and money for the purchase of scientific instruments.

If I am a writer, I take pride in my literary achievements. Here, for example, is my treatise on Swift, a Marxist analysis. This type of analysis, which is not synonymous with the Method or the New Faith, makes possible a keen penetration into historical events. Marx had a genius for observation. In following him one is secure against attack, for he is, after all, the prophet; and one can proclaim one's belief in the Method and the New Faith in a preface fulfilling much the same function as dedications to kings or tsars in times past. Here is my translation of a sixteenth-century poem, or my novel ¹[for a definition of *Ketman*, see cat. 116, pp. 57-60 - *Analyst*]

- 626 whose scene is laid in the distant past. Aren't they of per-
 155 manent value? Here are my translations from Russian. They are viewed with approbation and have brought me a large sum of money, but certainly Pushkin is a great poet, and his worth is not altered by the fact that today his poems serve Him as a means of propaganda. Obviously I must pay for the right to practice my profession with a certain number of articles and odes in the way of tribute. Still one's life on earth is not judged by transitory panegyrics written out of necessity.

These two examples of professional Ketman should demonstrate how little discomfort it creates for the rulers. It is the source of considerable dynamic force and one cause of the tremendous impetus toward education. The object is to establish some special field in which one can release one's energies, exploit one's knowledge and sensibility, and at the same time escape the fate of a functionary entirely at the mercy of political fluctuations. The son of a worker who becomes a chemist makes a *permanent* advance. The son of a worker who becomes a member of the security police rises to the surface, where large ships sail but where the sea is changeable and stormy. But most important of all, chemical experiments, bridges, translations of poetry, and medical care are exceptionally free of falsity. The State, in its turn, takes advantage of this Ketman because it needs chemists, engineers, and doctors. From time to time, it is true, there come from above muffled grumbles of hatred against those who practice Ketman in the realm of humanistic studies. Fadeyev, Moscow's literary overseer, attacked the University of Leningrad because one of its students had written a dissertation on the English poet, Walter Savage Landor. "Who needs Landor? Who ever heard of him?" cried Fadeyev. So it would

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seem that moderation and watchfulness are indicated for those who espouse this form of Ketman. 626
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Sceptical Ketman is widely disseminated throughout intellectual circles. One argues that humanity does not know how to handle its knowledge or how to resolve the problems of production and division of goods. The first scientific attempts to solve social problems, made in the nineteenth century, are interesting but not precise enough. They happened, however, into the hands of the Russians who, unable to think otherwise than dogmatically, raised these first attempts to the dignity of dogma. What is happening in Russia and the countries dependent upon her bespeaks a kind of insanity, but it is not impossible that Russia will manage to impose her insanity upon the whole world and that the return to reason will occur only after two or three hundred years. Finding oneself in the very midst of an historical cyclone, one must behave as prudently as possible, yielding externally to forces capable of destroying all adversaries. This does not prevent one from taking pleasure in one's observations, since what one beholds is indeed unprecedented. Surely man has never before been subjected to such pressure, never has he had to writhe and wriggle so to adapt himself to forms constructed according to the books but obviously not to his size. All his intellectual and emotional capacities are put to the test.

Whoever contemplates this daily sight of repudiation and humiliation knows more about man than an inhabitant of the West who feels no pressure other than that of money. The accumulating of this store of observations is the activity of a miser who counts his treasure in secret. Since this Ketman is based on a total lack of belief in the Method, it helps one conform externally to the obligatory

- 626 line by allowing for complete cynicism, and therefore for
155 elasticity in adjusting oneself to changing tactics.

626 Metaphysical Ketman¹ occurs generally in countries with
719 a Catholic past. Most examples of it within the Imperium
are found in Poland. This Ketman depends upon a *sus-
pended* belief in a metaphysical principle of the world. A
man attached to this Ketman regards the epoch in which
he lives as anti-metaphysical, and hence as one in which
no metaphysical faith can emerge. Humanity is learning
to think in rationalistic and materialistic categories; it is
burdened with immediate problems and entangled in a
class war. Other-worldly religions are crumbling, living
through a period of crisis and, what is worse, serving to
defend the obsolete order. This does not mean that man-
kind will not return to a better and purified religion in the
future. Perhaps the New Faith is an indispensable purga-
tory; perhaps God's purpose is being accomplished through
the barbarians, i.e. the Center², who are forcing the masses
to awaken out of their lethargy. The spiritual fare these
masses receive from the New Faith is inferior and insuf-
ficient. Still one must commend the Center for breaking
new ground and for demolishing externally splendid but
internally rotten façades. One should cooperate in this
task without betraying one's attachment to the Mystery.
All the more so because the Mystery has no possibility of
appearing in literature, for example, and because neither
the language nor the ideas at the disposal of contemporary
man are ripe enough to express it.

This metaphysical Ketman in its turn has a number of
varieties. Certain practicing Catholics serve even in the
security police, and *suspend* their Catholicism in executing
their inhumane work. Others, trying to maintain a Chris-
tian community in the bosom of the New Faith, come out
publicly as Catholics. They often succeed in preserving
[for a definition of 'Ketman', see cat 16, no 5760 - Analyst
Milosz - Analyst]

Ketman

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Catholic institutions, because the dialecticians are ready to accept so-called "progressive" and "patriotic" Catholics who comply in political matters. The mutual game is rather ambiguous. The rulers tolerate such Catholics as a temporary and necessary evil, reasoning that the stage has not yet arrived at which one can utterly wipe out religion, and that it is better to deal with accommodating bigots than with refractory ones. "Progressive Catholics" are, however, conscious of being relegated to a not particularly honorable place, that of shamans or witch-doctors from savage tribes whom one humors until one can dress them in trousers and send them to school. They appear in various state spectacles and are even sent abroad as shining testimonials to the Center's tolerance toward uncivilized races. One can compare their function to that of "noble savages" imported to the metropolis by colonial powers for state occasions. Their defense against total degradation is metaphysical Ketman: they swindle the devil who thinks he is swindling them. But the devil knows what they think and is satisfied.

What holds for such Catholics can be applied to members of other religions, as well as to persons outside any denomination. One of the most ominous reproaches leveled against writers is the suspicion that their verses, plays, or novels contain a "metaphysical residue." Since a writer is a civilizer who dares not be a shaman or a sorcerer, the slightest signs of a metaphysical tendency in him are unforgivable. The literature of the countries which, until the Second World War, were free from Moscow's domination betrayed especially strong inclinations in that direction, so that metaphysical deviation is of constant and imperative concern to the rulers. For instance, a play that introduces "strangeness," revealing the author's interest in the tragedy of life, has no chance of being produced be-

- 626 cause the tragedy of human fate leads to thoughts about
779 the mystery of human destiny. One forgives certain writers like Shakespeare these predispositions, but there is no question of permitting any contemporary author to harbor them. It is for this reason that Greek tragedies are not deemed suitable for theater repertoires. Marx loved the Greek tragedians, but let us not forget that the connection between the New Faith and Marx is rather superficial.

517 The New Faith is a Russian creation, and the Russian
636 intelligentsia which shaped it had developed the deepest contempt for all art that does not serve social ends directly. Other social functions of art, probably the most important ones, consistently escaped its understanding. As for poetry, since its sources are hard to differentiate from the sources of all religion, it is singularly exposed to persecution. True, the poet is free to describe hills, trees, and flowers, but if he should feel that boundless exaltation in the face of nature that seized Wordsworth on his visit to Tintern Abbey, he is at once suspect. This is an excellent means of eliminating the legions of bad poets who like to confess their pantheistic flights publicly, but it is also a means of exterminating poetry as a whole and replacing it by jingles little better than the singing commercials broadcast over the radio in America. A painter, in turn, may be attacked quite as easily for using abbreviated and synthesized forms (formalism), as for an excessive love of the beauty of the world, i.e. a contemplative attitude which signifies that he is a metaphysicist by temperament. A musician should see to it that his compositions are easy to translate into the language of common activities (enthusiasm for work, folk festivities, etc.), and that no element remains which is difficult to grasp and hence dangerous. If metaphysical Ketman is tolerated in the "savages," i.e. those who profess the Christian religion, in the artists

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who are considered the educators of society, it is severely punished. ⁵¹⁷
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Ethical Ketman results from opposition to the ethics of the New Faith, which is based on the principle that good and evil are definable solely in terms of service or harm to the interests of the Revolution. Since exemplary behavior of citizens in their inter-relations aids the cause of socialism, great emphasis is placed upon individual morality. ⁶²⁶
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"The development of a new man" is the key point in the New Faith's program. Demands made upon Party members are exceedingly harsh. One exacts of them no small degree of abstinence. As a result, admission to the Party is not unlike entrance into a religious order; and the literature of the New Faith treats this act with a gravity equal to that with which Catholic literature speaks of the vows of young nuns. The higher one stands in the Party hierarchy, the more attentively is one's private life supervised. Love of money, drunkenness, or a confused love-life disqualify a Party member from holding important offices. Hence the upper brackets of the Party are filled by ascetics devoted to the single cause of Revolution. As for certain human tools, deprived of real influence but useful because of their names, even if they belong to the Party one tolerates or sometimes encourages their weaknesses, for they constitute a guarantee of obedience. The general ethical ideal of the New Faith is puritanical. If it were feasible to lodge all the citizens in cells and release them only for work or for political meetings, that would undoubtedly be most desirable. But alas, one must make concessions to human nature. Procreation is possible only as a result of sexual relations between men and women, and one must take this inconvenience into account.

The "new man" is conditioned to acknowledge the
A [For a definition of "Ketman," see cat. 116, pp. 57-60--Analyst]

- 626 good of the whole as the sole norm of his behavior. He
577 thinks and reacts like others; is modest, industrious, satisfied with what the state gives him; limits his private life to nights spent at home, and passes all the rest of his time amidst his companions at work or at play, observing them carefully and reporting their actions and opinions to the authorities. Informing was and is known in many civilizations, but the New Faith declares it a cardinal virtue of the good citizen (though the name itself is carefully avoided). It is the basis of each man's fear of his fellow-men. Work in an office or factory is hard not only because of the amount of labor required, but even more because of the need to be on guard against omnipresent and vigilant eyes and ears. After work one goes to political meetings or special lectures, thus lengthening a day that is without a moment of relaxation or spontaneity. The people one talks with may seem relaxed and careless, sympathetic and indignant, but if they appear so, it is only to arouse corresponding attitudes and to extract confidences which they can report to their superiors.

In effect this cult of the community produces something which poisons the community itself. The mentality of the Party's sages is, indeed, rather strange. They make concessions to physiological human weaknesses, but they refuse to admit that man has other foibles as well: that he feels fine when he can relax, and unhappy when he is afraid, that lying is bad for him because it creates internal tension. These weaknesses, together with others like the desire to better one's own lot at the expense of one's fellow-men, transform the ethic which was originally founded on cooperation and brotherhood into an ethic of a war pitting all men against all others, and granting the greatest chances of survival to the craftiest. Victory in this new struggle seems to belong to a breed different

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from that which was favored to win in the battle for money in the early days of industrial capitalism. If biting dogs can be divided into two main categories, noisy and brutal, or silent and slyly vicious, then the second variety would seem most privileged in the countries of the New Faith. Forty or fifty years of education in these new ethical maxims must create a new and irretrievable species of mankind. The "new man" is not merely a postulate. He is beginning to become a reality.

Ethical Ketman is not rare among highly placed figures in the Party. These persons, no matter how capable they are of murdering millions of people in the name of Communism, try to compensate for their professional severity and are often more honorable in their personal relations than people who affect individualistic ethics. Their capacity to sympathize and help is almost unlimited. Indeed this very feeling of compassion pushed them onto the road of revolution in their youth, and in this they reiterated the experience of Marx himself. One finds this Ketman chiefly among the old Communists. Conflicts between friendship and the interests of the Revolution are matters they weigh at length in their conscience; and they are pitiless only when completely convinced that, in shielding a friend or in refraining from denouncing him, they are injuring that cause which is most precious to them. Though they are usually esteemed as people of crystalline righteousness, they are not safe from frequent accusations of "intellectuality," a contemptuous epithet for those who are blameless as theoreticians, but hampered in action by an over-sensitivity to ethical considerations. A revolutionary should be without scruples. It is better to cut down human trees blindly than to wonder which among them are really rotten.

This variety of Ketman is one of the most prevalent in

- 626 the people's democracies because the new ethic is of re-
517 cent inculcation, whereas the ethic vanquished by the New Faith was ensconced there for centuries. One can never foresee when and in whom this Ketman will appear, which makes for an element of surprise. Individuals who give one every reason to suppose that they do not denounce others turn out to be inveterate informers; individuals who are apparently most indifferent to "prejudices," show themselves inexplicably loyal toward their friends and even toward strangers. Since this Ketman augments the difficulties of controlling the citizens' thoughts, it is diligently sought out and penalized; yet the number of situations to which it can be applied is so great that it often eludes all manner of pressure.

The inhabitants of Western countries little realize that millions of their fellow-men, who seem superficially more or less similar to them, live in a world as fantastic as that of the men from Mars. They are unaware of the perspectives on human nature that Ketman opens. Life in constant internal tension develops talents which are latent in man. He does not even suspect to what heights of cleverness and psychological perspicacity he can rise when he is cornered and must either be skillful or perish. The survival of those best adapted to mental acrobatics creates a human type that has been rare until now. The necessities which drive men to Ketman sharpen the intellect.

- 626 Whoever would take the measure of intellectual life in
517 the countries of Central or Eastern Europe from the monotonous articles appearing in the press or the stereotyped speeches pronounced there, would be making a grave error. Just as theologians in periods of strict orthodoxy expressed their views in the rigorous language of the Church, so the writers of the people's democracies make use of an accepted special style, terminology, and linguis-

tic ritual. What is important is not what someone said but what he wanted to say, disguising his thought by removing a comma, inserting an "and," establishing this rather than another sequence in the problems discussed. Unless one has lived there one cannot know how many titanic battles are being fought, how the heroes of Ketman are falling, what this warfare is being waged over. Obviously, people caught up in this daily struggle are rather contemptuous of their compatriot political émigrés. A surgeon cannot consider a butcher his equal in dexterity; just so a Pole, Czech, or Hungarian practiced in the art of dissimulation smiles when he learns that someone in the emigration has called him a traitor (or a swine) at the very moment when this traitor (or swine) is engaged in a match of philosophical chess on whose outcome the fate of fifteen laboratories or twenty ateliers depends. They do not know how one pays—those abroad do not know. They do not know what one buys, and at what price.

Ketman as a social institution is not entirely devoid of advantages. In order to evaluate them, one need only look at life in the West. Westerners, and especially Western intellectuals, suffer from a special variety of *taedium vitae*; their emotional and intellectual life is too dispersed. Everything they think and feel evaporates like steam in an open expanse. Freedom is a burden to them. No conclusions they arrive at are binding: it may be so, then again it may not. The result is a constant uneasiness. The happiest of them seem to be those who become Communists. They live within a wall which they batter themselves against, but which provides them with a resistance that helps them define themselves. Steam that once evaporated into the air becomes a force under pressure. An even greater energy is generated in those who must hide their Communist convictions, that is, who must practice Ketman, a

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ways served as a tool; their leaders, most often of non-peasant origin have used them for their own ends. The power of the peasants lies in their number; it is a power only when a man like Lenin comes along and throws the weight of their numbers into the scale of events. Obviously, peasants can cause trouble in such moments of upheaval as wars. As long as a private peasant economy exists it acts as a natural base for partisan operations. A peasant hut is the ideal place for partisans to eat, sleep, and work out plans of action. Therefore, a collective farm, where a man's every step is easy to trace, guarantees a degree of control that is indispensable if one wants to preclude hostile underground activity.

Workers are far more important than peasants. Most of them are antagonistic to the new system. That is understandable. They resent the norms they must fill. Those norms are constantly rising. Though the "solidarity of the workers" makes a fine slogan, it does not mean that the solidarity of the crews in a factory is to be tolerated. Their ranks are split by the institution of "shock-workers" which is fostered by an appeal to ambition and enforced by pressure from members of the Party cell. A man may at first refuse to become a shock-worker. But gradually he learns it does not pay to be stubborn; because when workers are being chosen for a course in bookkeeping, for instance, his application is rejected, or when his turn comes for a free vacation he is declared ineligible, etc.

The attitude of the workers toward the regime is ambivalent. On the one hand, they prize its positive contributions. Unemployment is a thing of the past; in fact, there is a constant lack of skilled labor. Not only the head of a family but most of its members are employed. This accumulation of wages means that a family would be able to live better than ever before if only the stores were fairly

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homemade means they can devise. Production comes first, 565
even at the price of using up the machines. Discipline is 466
severe; negligence or even a few minutes' lateness are
strictly punished. No wonder, then, that the bad side of
the system outweighs the good in the worker's mind. Still,
he dares not complain. If he betrays any signs of discon-
tent the security police, whose secret agents are his co-
workers and sometimes his friends, takes care of him.

The wildcat strikes that break out from time to time 565
are no threat in themselves, for peace returns quickly 468
after mass arrests of all participants. They are, however,
ominous signs that discontentment has reached a tension
that can find release only in desperate acts. A strike re-
quires a certain minimum of organization. That is why
nothing else makes Party dialecticians so uneasy. The
workers are the only class capable of organized action—
that Marxist principle has never been forgotten. No ac-
tion, however, is possible without leaders. If the leaders
reason correctly, that is, if they understand the necessities
of the historic process, then the workers as a mass will be
unable to protest.

Everything, thus, takes us back to the question of mas- 626 ●
tery over the mind. Every possible opportunity for educa- 565
tion and advancement is offered to the more energetic and
active individuals among the workers. The new, incredi-
bly extensive bureaucracy is recruited from among the
young people of working-class origin. The road before
them is open, open but guarded: their thinking must be
based on the firm principles of dialectical materialism.
Schools, theaters, films, painting, literature, and the press
all shape their thinking.

We should also call attention to a new institution, the 575
"club," whose significance is comparable to that of the 626
chapel in the middle ages. It exists in every factory, ev-

- 575 cry school, every office. On its walls hang portraits of
- 626 Party leaders draped with red bunting. Every few days, meetings following pre-arranged agendas take place, meetings that are as potent as religious rites. The Catholic Church wisely recognized that faith is more a matter of collective suggestion than of individual conviction. Collective religious ceremonies induce a state of belief. Folding one's hands in prayer, kneeling, singing hymns *precede* faith, for faith is a psycho-physical and not simply a psychological phenomenon. Edward Gibbon, describing the effects of Theodosius's decrees forbidding pagan rites (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter XXVIII), says: "The devotion of the poet, or the philosopher, may be secretly nourished by prayer, meditation, and study; but the exercise of public worship appears to be the only solid foundation of the religious sentiments of the people, which derive their force from imitation and habit. The interruption of that public exercise may consummate, in the period of a few years, the important work of a national revolution. The memory of theological opinions cannot long be preserved, without the artificial helps of priests, of temples, and of books. The ignorant vulgar, whose minds are still agitated by the blind hopes and terrors of superstition, will be soon persuaded by their superiors to direct their vows to the reigning deities of the age; and will insensibly imbibe an ardent zeal for the support and propagation of the new doctrine, which spiritual hunger at first compelled them to accept." The Party has learned this wise lesson from the Church. People who attend a "club" submit to a collective rhythm, and so come to feel that it is absurd to think differently from the collective. The collective is composed of units that doubt; but as these individuals pronounce the ritual phrases and sing the ritual songs, they create a collective aura to which they

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in turn surrender. Despite its apparent appeal to reason, ⁵¹⁵ the "club's" activity comes under the heading of collec- ⁶²⁶ •
tive magic. The rationalism of the doctrine is fused with
sorcery, and the two strengthen each other. Free discussion
is, of course, eliminated. If what the doctrine proclaims is
as true as the fact that 2×2 equals 4, to tolerate the opin-
ion that 2×2 equals 5 would be indecent.

From his first day in school, the young citizen receives ⁸²⁶
an education based on this truth. There is a great differ- ⁸⁷⁶
ence between schools in the people's democracies and
schools in the West, for example the schools I attended in
pre-war Poland. My friends and I were exposed to a dual ⁸²⁹
system of values. Mathematics, physics, and biology taught
us scientific laws, and inculcated respect for a materialis-
tic outlook inherited from the nineteenth century. History
and Letters seemed to elude scientific laws, while the his-
tory of the Catholic Church and Apologetics cast doubt,
though often naïvely, on what physics and biology taught.
In the people's democracies, the materialistic outlook of
the nineteenth century has been extended consistently to
every subject; history and every branch of human crea-
tivity are presented as governed by unshakeable and *al-*
ready known laws.

In the nineteenth century, with the rise of literacy,
brochures popularizing scientific theories made their ap-
pearance. Regardless of the intrinsic worth of these theo-
ries, we must grant that from the moment they take on a
popular form they become something other than what
they were as hypotheses of scientific research. For ex-
ample, the simplified and vulgarized version of Darwin's
theory of the origin of species and the struggle for exist-
ence is not the same concept that it was for Darwin or
for his scholarly opponents. It takes on emotional color-
ation, and changes into an important sociological element.

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reflexes, was a deeply religious man. Moscow caused him 779
no trouble over this because he was an eminent scientist
and because he was old. The creator of the theory of con-
ditioned reflexes—the very theory that constitutes one of
the strongest arguments against the existence of some sort
of constant called “human nature”! The defenders of reli-
gion maintain that this “human nature” cannot change
completely; that gods and churches have existed over
thousands of years and in all kinds of civilizations, and
that one can expect this to be true of the future as well.
What went on in Professor Pavlov’s head if two systems of
concepts, one scientific and one religious, existed simul-
taneously there?

The Party teaches that “existence shapes consciousness,” 659
that circumstances alter men. But it matters little whether
religious drives result from “human nature” or from cen-
turies of conditioning; they exist. During the war against
Hitler, the Soviet Union had to dust off its priests as well
as appeal to nationalistic feelings. When imminent death
brings that moment of absurd revelation that *everything*
is senseless, dialectical materialism suddenly discloses its
mathematical structure. Man falls from the industriously
built bridges. He prefers to surrender to the magic of
icons.

In its own fashion, the Party too is a church. Its dictator- 626 ●
ship over the earth and its transformation of the human 779
species depend on the success with which it can channel 659
irrational human drives and use them to its own ends.
No, logical arguments are not enough. “Club” ceremonies,
poetry, novels, films are so important because they reach
deeper into the stratum on which the emotional conflict
rages. No other church can be tolerated; Christianity is 779
Public Enemy No. 1. It fosters all the skepticism of the 829
masses as to the radical transformation of mankind. If,

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exist, how can he gaze indifferently at the suffering of 779 people whose only sin was that they blocked the path of 829 "historical processes"? To lull his conscience he resorts to the thesis that a reactionary cannot be a good man.

Who is the reactionary? Everyone who opposes the in- 626 • evitable historical processes, i.e. the Politburo police. The thesis of the "sin of the reactionary" is argued very cleverly: every perception is "oriented," i.e. at the very moment of perceiving we introduce our ideas into the material of our observations; only he sees reality truly who evaluates it in terms of the interests of the class that is the lever of the future, i.e. the proletariat. The writings of Lenin and Stalin teach us what the interests of the proletariat are. Whoever sees reality otherwise than as the proletariat sees it falsely; in other words, his picture of reality is deformed by the pressure of the interests of classes that are backward and so destined to disappear. Whoever sees the world falsely necessarily acts badly; whoever acts badly is a bad man; therefore the reactionary is a bad man, and one should not feel sorry for him.

This line of reasoning has at least one flaw—it ignores the facts. The pressure of an all-powerful totalitarian state creates an emotional tension in its citizens that determines their acts. When people are divided into "loyalists" and "criminals" a premium is placed on every type of conformist, coward, and hireling; whereas among the "criminals" one finds a singularly high percentage of people who are direct, sincere, and true to themselves. From the social point of view these persons would constitute the best guarantee that the future development of the social organism would be toward good. From the Christian point of view they have no other sin on their conscience save their contempt for Caesar, or their incorrect evaluation of his might.

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what to say. Logically, everything is as it should be. From the philosophical premises to the collectivization of the farms, everything makes up a single closed whole, a solid and imposing pyramid. The lone individual inevitably asks himself if his antagonism is not wrong; all he can oppose to the entire propaganda apparatus are simply his irrational desires. Should he not, in fact, be ashamed of them? 156

The Party is vigilantly on guard lest these longings be transmuted into new and vital intellectual formulas adapted to new conditions and therefore capable of winning over the masses. Neither the reaction nor the Church are as great a menace as is *heresy*. If men familiar with dialectics and able to present dialectical materialism in a new light appear, they must be rendered harmless at once. A professor of philosophy who clings to obsolete "idealistic" concepts is not particularly dangerous. He loses his lectureship, but he is allowed to earn a living by editing texts, etc. Whereas a professor who, using the names of Marx and Engels, permits himself departures from orthodoxy sows seeds from which alarming crops may grow. 626 •

Only the bourgeois persists in thinking that nothing results from these nuances of thought. The Party knows that much can come of them: there was a time when the Revolution was merely a nuance in the thinking of a little group of theoreticians led by Lenin, quarreling around a café table in Switzerland. The most neuralgic points of the doctrine are philosophy, literature, the history of art, and literary criticism; those are the points where man in his unfortunate complexity enters the equation. The difference of a tiny fraction in the premises yields dizzying differences after the calculation is completed. A deviation from the line in the evaluation of some work of art may

- 626 become the leaven of a political upheaval. The Party rightly and logically condemned the foremost Marxist literary scholar of the twentieth century, the Hungarian professor Lukacs. Deep, hidden reasons lay behind the enthusiasm his works aroused in the Marxists of the people's democracies. They saw in him the harbinger of a new philosophy and a new literature. The dislike of "socialist realism" that he betrayed corresponded to the belief, prevalent in the first years after the Second World War, that in the people's democracies the science of Marx and Engels would blaze new paths, unknown in Russia. Because Lukacs expressed this belief in his books, the Party had no course but to stigmatize him.

000 When one considers the matter logically, it becomes obvious that intellectual terror is a principle that Leninism-Stalinism can never forsake, even if it should achieve victory on a world scale. The enemy, in a potential form, will *always* be there; the only friend will be the man who accepts the doctrine 100 per cent. If he accepts only 99 per cent, he will necessarily have to be considered a foe, for from that remaining 1 per cent a new church can arise. The explanation Stalinists often advance, that this is only a *stage* resulting from "capitalist encirclement," is self-contradictory. The concept of a *stage* presupposes planning from the top, absolute control now and always. Eastern rulers are aware of this contradiction. If they were not, they would not have to present forced participation in clubs and parades, forced voting for a single list, forced raising of production norms, etc. as spontaneous and voluntary acts. This is a dark, unpleasant point for even the most passionate believers.

This way of posing the problem discloses the madness of the doctrines. Party dialecticians know that similar attempts on the part of other orthodoxies have always